

REMARKS

The examiner is thanked for indicating that claims 18-21 are allowed, and that claims 4-8, 11, and 13-17 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Reconsideration of the pending application is respectfully requested on the basis of the following particulars.

1. Amendments and Support for Same

Claims 1-21 were pending prior to this response. By this response, claims 1, 5-7, 9, and 17 have been amended, and claims 4 and 10-11 have been cancelled. Amended claim 1 now recites all of the features in original claim 4. Consequently, claim 4 has been cancelled, and claims 5-7 have been amended to change their dependency to claim 1. Amended claim 9 recites all of the features in original claims 10 and 11. Consequently, claims 10-11 have been cancelled, and claim 17 has been amended to change its dependency to claim 9. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 5-9, and 12-21 are pending for consideration, of which claims 1, 9, and 18 are independent. Approval and entry of the amendments are respectfully requested.

2. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-3, 9-10, and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Balanchard (US 5,629,929) in view of Papasakellariou (US 6,904,106). In the interest of expediting the allowance of this application, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 9, as shown above. Specifically, amended claim 1 recites all of the allowable features in original claim 4, and amended claim 9 recites all of the features in claim 10 and all of the allowable features in original claim 11.

3. Conclusion

In view of the amendments to the claims, and in further view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is requested that claims 1-3, 5-9, and 12-27 be allowed along with claims 18-21 and the application be passed to issue.

If any issues remain that may be resolved by a telephone or facsimile communication with the Applicant's attorney, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the numbers shown.

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Date: SEPTEMBER 21, 2007

Respectfully submitted,



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